

Washington, D.C. - Congressman David Price (NC-04) released the following statement today in response to President Bush's announcement of a special U.S. envoy to Sudan to help end the ongoing violence.

On September 9, 2004 - just over two years ago - then Secretary of State Colin Powell took a firm stand on the violence in the Darfur region of Sudan by labeling the atrocities "genocide". Since that time, as the U.S. and the international community have remained paralyzed, tens of thousands of Darfuris have been killed and hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee their homes, and the situation on the ground in Darfur continues to deteriorate. I have joined many of my colleagues in Congress in calling for a more active U.S. role in ending the crisis, particularly by appointing a special envoy to Sudan.

Today I am pleased that President Bush finally decided to take this important step, by naming former U.S. Agency for International Development chief Andrew Natsios to be Presidential Special Envoy to Darfur. Mr. Natsios is faced with a difficult road ahead, but we stand with him as he applies the necessary pressure on the government of Khartoum to approve the U.N. peacekeeping force that must take over from African Union forces currently in the country. Ending the humanitarian crisis in Sudan should be among the top foreign policy goals of the Administration. This important step forward should be followed by a firm commitment of diplomacy and resources to achieve that goal.

However, the work cannot not stop there. In a show of bipartisan concern earlier this year, the House voted 416-3 to pass the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act. Among other things, the Act would authorize assistance for peacekeeping troops in Darfur and impose sanctions on the Sudanese government for its support of militia groups. Similar legislation is pending before the Senate, but has not yet been called up for debate. I call upon Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist to immediately bring this legislation to the floor for a vote, and I urge President Bush to sign the bill into law immediately upon passage and to move swiftly to fully implement its provisions.

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